

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ALLEGED TOP SECRET U.S. STUDY OF ITALIAN POLITICAL
STABILITY

1. THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE INTERESTED IN THE FOLLOWING TEXT
OF AN ARTICLE CARRIED IN THE LEFT-WING WEEKLY L'ESPRESSO IN ITS
ISSUE DATED SEPTEMBER 15, 1974. THE ARTICLE IS ENTITLED "THE
WAY THEY SEE US IN WASHINGTON, SPASTICS WARD, ITALIAN SECTION".
THE ARTICLE, DATE-LINED NEW YORK, WRITTEN BY MAURO CALAMANDREI,
CONCERNS AN ALLEGED TOP SECRET COMMITTEE SET UP TO STUDY
DEVELOPMENTS IN ITALY WITH PARTICULAR REGARD TO POSSIBLE EXTRA-
CONSTITUTIONAL SOLUTIONS TO CURRENT ITALIAN PROBLEMS.

2. "A TOP SECRET COMMITTEE HAS BEEN SET UP A FEW WEEKS AGO BY
KISSINGER SOLELY TO TAKE CARE OF OUR COUNTRY, OF ITS MALAISE, AND
EXAMINE POSSIBLE ACTIONS. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS IT HAS DRAWN?

NEW YORK. IN LESS THAN TWO WEEKS PRESIDENT LEONE AND FOREIGN
MINISTER MORO WILL VISIT WASHINGTON, AND STATE DEPARTMENT DIPLOMATS
ARE GIVING THE FINISHING TOUCH TO A SERIES OF REPORTS, MEMORANDA AND
DOCUMENTS PREPARED BY EXPERTS IN ITALIAN AFFAIRS. DURING THE
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SAME WEEK MINISTER OF THE TREASURY COLOMBO, THE GOVERNOR OF THE

BANK OF ITALY CARLI, OSSOLA AND OTHER EXPERTS IN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY POLICIES WILL ALSO BE IN WASHINGTON. THEREFORE THERE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE A BROAD AND EXTENSIVE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. WHAT WILL THE RESULTS BE?

AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY MADE ITS CHOICES. 'THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN EXAMINING FOR SOME WEEKS THE SITUATION IN ITALY AND HAS ALSO DECIDED WHAT COURSE TO FOLLOW.' THIS IS WHAT A FORMER DIPLOMAT, WHO HELD FOR THE LAST 30 YEARS IMPORTANT POSITIONS IN VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS, TOLD ME CATEGORICALLY. BUT WHAT IS THIS 'COURSE'?

IT IS OUTLINED IN A SECRET DOCUMENT WHICH HAS BEEN PREPARED, DISCUSSED AND APPROVED DURING A SERIES OF MEETINGS OF THE PLANNING AND COORDINATION GROUP OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT. A PERSON WHO READ IT AND ATTENDEND SOME OF THE MEETINGS TOLD ME THAT 'THE DOCUMENT CONTAINS TWO CONCLUSIONS. THESE TWO CONCLUSIONS ARE:

1. THE CRISIS IN ITALY IS ESSENTIALLY OF AN ECONOMIC NATURE AND MAY BE SOLVED WITHOUT ANY STRUCTURAL CHANGES THROUGH SOME PROMPT ACTIONS; 2. THE UNITES STATES MUST USE ITS INFLUENCE AND RESOURCES TO HELP ITALY OVERCOME THIS CRISIS, BUT IT IS BETTER, AT LEAST AT THIS STAGE, FOR THE UNITED STATES TO "'MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE' (TO LIE LOW?) THAT IS, TO REMAIN BEHIND THE SCENES AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO TAKE PUBLIC INITIATIVES.'" THESE ARE THE CONCLUSIONS. BUT HOW WERE THEY REACHED AND WHY?

THE DOCUMENT FIRST OF ALL EXAMINES THE VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES WHICH MIGHT EMERGE FROM ITALY'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CRISIS. ONE OF THE 'POSSIBILITIES' IS THAT IT WILL LEAD TO A FAR-RIGHT GOVERNMENT LED BY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC RIGHT AND SUPPORTED BY THE CHURCH, THE LARGE INDUSTRIES AND THE ARMED FORCES; ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS A MILITARY GOVERNMENT RESULTING FROM A COUP D'ETAT. AS REGARDS 'LEFTIST' POSSIBILITIES, THEY RANGE FROM A CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED FROM THE OUTSIDE BY THE COMMUNISTS TO A COMPARATIVELY MODERATE LEFTIST COALITION, TO A REVOLUTIONARY REGIME MUCH MORE RADICAL THAN ALLENDE'S REGIME.

IN THE COURSEOF THE DISCUSSIONS, THE IDEA OF AN OPENING TO THE COMMUNISTS WAS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION SINCE, ACCORDING TO CERTAIN ADVISORY BODIES OF THE INDUSTRIAL AREA, SUCH AN OPENING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WOULD BE THE BEST WAY OF ENSURING SOCIAL PEACE AND AN ECONOMIC RECOVERY WITH A MINIMUM AMOUNT OF RISK BOTH FROM A POLITICAL AND A STRATEGICAL POINT OF VIEW. HOWEVER, THIS POSSIBILITY WAS REJECTED. NOT ONLY SO, BUT THE INTERMINISTERIAL COMMISSION REJECTED ALL OPTIONS IN FAVOR OF POLITICAL CHANGES, CONCLUDING THAT THE SITUATION IN ITALY DOES NOT WARRANT A SHIFT TO THE RIGHT OR TO THE LEFT. IN SPITE OF THE GRAVE DEFECTS OF THE PRESENT POLITICAL CLASS AND THE PRECARIOUSNESS OF THE EXISTING EQUILIBRIUM, THE BEST SOLUTION IS

TO LEAVE IT UNCHANGED, THE DOCUMENT SAYS. I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO FIND OUT WHETHER THIS CONCLUSION STEMS FROM THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF KISSINGER'S DIPLOMACY, ACCORDING TO WHICH THE WISEST POLICY IS TO RESPECT THE EQUILIBRIUM OF EXISTING FORCES, OR WHETHER STRATEGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THE WEIGHT OF THE MILITARY PREVAILED. IN ANY CASE, THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCLUSION REACHED IS THAT ITALY'S MOST URGENT PROBLEM IS AN ECONOMIC PROBLEM AND THAT IT IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO HELP OUR COUNTRY OVERCOME THIS CRISIS. HOW?

ON OTHER OCCASIONS, IN THE PAST, THE UNITED STATES HELPED ALLIED COUNTRIES IN TROUBLE BY TAKING DIRECT MEASURES AND THE NEWS OF A DIRECT SUPPORT GRANTED BY THE UNITED STATES WAS JUST AS EFFECTIVE AS THE AID ITSELF. TODAY, HOWEVER, THE SITUATION IS DIFFERENT. FIRST OF ALL, ITALY IS ONLY ONE OF THE MANY NATIONS IN TROUBLE; MOREOVER, ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE CLOSELY INTERWINED WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL OVERSENSITIVENESS AND POLITICAL PREJUDICES WHICH CANNOT BE EASILY DISENTANGLED. THE COMMISSION THEREFORE BELIEVES THAT IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE FIRST INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF ITALY COME FROM COUNTRIES GEOGRAPHICALLY AND POLITICALLY CLOSER TO OURS AND THAT ANY AID, EVEN UNILATERAL AID, SHOULD BE PART OF A PROGRAM OF COLLECTIVE INITIATIVES. THUS, THE FIRST STEP OF THE UNITED STATES WAS GOING TO TAKE WAS TO ENCOURAGE THE LOAN GRANTED BY THE GERMANS AND THOSE WHICH MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE COMMON MARKET. MEANWHILE IT WOULD DO ITS PART IN MONETARY MARKETS AND ASSURE GERMANY THAT, IN CASE OF FURTHER NEED, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WILL BE READY TO TAKE DIRECT ACTION. HOW? THIS IS GOING TO BE ONE OF THE BASIC POINTS THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED WITH LEONE AND MORO." VOLPE

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